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CONTENTS

PAGE

NOTICE 1

1. THE MID-INDIA REGION
Dr H. H. Presler, S.T.B., Ph.D. . . . 2

2. EXAMPLES OF HINDU PRAYERS
(*selected from Devaram*) 11

3. TIRUKURAL (A New Translation)
Dr R. D. Immanuel, M.A., B.D., Th.D. . . 12

4. THE PHILOSOPHY OF MADHAVA
Mr V. E. Varughese, B.Sc. 16

5. STUDIES IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA IV
Dr R. D. Immanuel, M.A., B.D., Th.D. . . 22

6. BOOK REVIEW 25

THE INDIA CULTURES QUARTERLY

Editor: DR R. D. IMMANUEL
Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, M.P., India

VOL. 18-21 FIRST QUARTER 1960-1964 NO. 1

NOTICE

Foreign (outside India) readers are invited to become permanent subscribers to THE INDIA CULTURES QUARTERLY, which aims to record factual information of use to students interested in the cultures of India. Please note the low annual fee which has been adjusted to the cost price of printing and mailing, on a non-profit basis.

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Readers in India are advised that the subscription fee is Rs 2 for salaries of Rs 200 or less, and Rs 4 for salaries of Rs 201 or more. Note that henceforth Dr R. D. Immanuel will be in charge of editorial matters (as in the past), and Dr H. H. Presler will be responsible for the Mid-India feature and assisting with the business details.

THE MID-INDIA REGION

By Dr Henry H. Presler

Note: This regular feature is contributed by the director of the Department of Organized Research of Leonard Theological College, with the aim of focusing attention on some aspects of cultures in the center of the peninsula. The author combines languages, history, and social science in his procedures.

Misunderstood Hypocrisy

Feigning to be what one is not, or pretending to believe what one does not, or practising outwardly what is denied inwardly, is generally condemned morally, and occasionally misunderstood scientifically. This article accepts the disvalue generally placed upon hypocrisy, but seeks to demonstrate that feigning or pretending or contradicting belief by practice are not necessarily hypocrisy, and that to call them such eliminates the possibility of understanding accurately the nature of such behaviour. To define a contradiction between belief and practice in terms of insincerity may be appropriate for a moralist, but not for a student of human behaviour. The latter knows that an accurate understanding of the behaviour of another person partly depends upon learning the meaning of the behaviour *to him*, and that such discovery may reveal unawareness of an apparent contradiction, and blissful ignorance of any problem posed by a pair of opposites.

Failure to grasp the meaning of supposed pretence has led some field workers into errors of classification and analysis.

1. Some observers have thought the respondent believed what he practised, whereas he did not. Consequently, their entire analysis went awry.
2. Some observers have come to know the respondent does not believe what he practices, but have neglected to probe to the root of the matter. Instead, they have read a variety of motives into the inconsistency, such as economic gain, self-display, and so on. Then they have collected around such speculations, facts that seemed to confirm them.
3. Other observers have learned that the respondent does not believe in his heart what he professes with his acts, and then have tried to justify paradoxical behaviour by attributing some social good derived. They have proposed that the respondent obtains harmony with his fellows; or some end such as group solidarity has been put forward as an explanation.

Seeming duplicity may occur in various manifestations of cultural behaviour. A respondent may secretly consider an aged male an old fool, but treat him with the deference due the wisdom of an elder;

he may loathe his relatives but so treat them as to maintain family unity; he may prefer a different economic system, and at the same time stoutly defend the one bequeathed to him.

Religion offers further illustrations of misunderstood hypocrisy, and provides the examples for what follows. Since 1937 the writer has been observing the behaviour of Indians, and the reactions of Western field workers to that behaviour. When confronted with ostensible affectation, the latter have described the performers with words like 'quacks', 'profiteers', 'professionals', and 'hypocrites'. But another hypothesis was possible, namely, that belief and disbelief are not closely correlated with religious behaviour in the Mid-India region. If confirmed, this hypothesis would discount the so-called 'practical results' and 'functional significance' ascribed to the paradox of negative attitude and positive practice. This proposition turns the field worker's attention away from blame and wrong assessment of the facts, into an effort to find the root reason why a man may deny mentally what he performs outwardly. That basic cause or those basic causes may be reasonable and illuminating, or unreasonable and illuminating. Whatever the sources, they may reveal the meaning of the questionable experience to the person having it.

In the Mid-India region I find at least three sources for behaviour misunderstood as hypocrisy, and each is non-intellectual, and not pondered, not subjectively contemplated. These three will now be described.

I

Informal Initiation

There is no single word in the vernacular used by my respondents, or in English, which comprehends what is meant in this paper by informal initiation. Is there any single word in any language to indicate this fairly common event in human experience? We do have phrases in English, such as, 'It dawned upon me at last. . . .' or, 'When I came to be in the know. . . .' or, 'When I grew up and understood the ins and outs of the folly. . . .' or, 'once I tumbled to the matter. . . .' or, 'At last I saw through the affair' or, 'I got wise to'. Informal initiation is a term to describe the sort of mental change implied in such phrases. The adjective, informal indicates the lack of any specific time, or any institutional plan, or any set procedure for producing the inner mental change. The word, initiation, insists that something drastic has happened within the nervous system of the individual, an alteration of his orientation, which was produced by unanticipated influences. Henceforth, he is a differently organized person. He may be disillusioned, sad and melancholy because of the upheaval; he may be liberated, secretly proud and contemptuous of the uninitiated, or he may have compassion for them. He is in any case, changed, and will never be as he previously was. He has been informally initiated by outer circumstance or inner development or both.

An important feature of informal initiation is its rarity. It happens to the few, at least in Mid-India. Most people go from birth to death within one universe of discourse. Why this is so, lies outside the boundries of this paper. The consequence is that a person who has undergone informal initiation seeks the company of the few others in the same condition of internal alteration. Together they form a clique of emancipated individuals, unable to convince the uninitiated and therefore inclined to treat them good-humouredly. Often such become the leaders and the custodians of the sacred lore in which they no longer fully believe. This makes their outward conformity reprehensible to a field worker who does not look beneath the surface.

Such a clique of unbelieving leaders is found in both the Aryan and the non-Aryan traditions of India.

1. The Aryan

Students familiar with the sacred literature of the Indo-Aryans do not require proof texts to demonstrate the existence of an inner circle of changed persons. The burden of the Upanishads is that to the few has been revealed the hollowness of symbolism, ritual, and works of merit, and they substitute a formula for salvation, namely, the ethereal knowledge of the truth. These few are to view the uninitiated with condescension and compassion, and the outward behaviour of the many, though useless, is not to be stopped, but is rather to be watched by the elite in silence.

The Bhagavad Gita sets forth several procedures whereby men endeavour to fulfil the cultural norms, but one of them is designated as far superior, and few there be that find it. The Gita regards the lesser ways with equanimity, and develops a small coterie of the elite who, freed from the old norms, may nevertheless perform them without fear of being charged with hypocrisy.

The new Vedantism cultivates the emancipated few. Swami Vivekananda said: 'Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects or churches or temples; they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man which is spirituality, and the more that this is developed in a man, the more powerful he is for good .... In every temple, if one stands by and listens, he will find the worshippers apply all the attributes of God—including omnipresence—to the images. The child is father to the man. Would it be right for the old man to say that childhood is a sin?'[1]

The Aryan tradition produced a minority of elite as the crown of its caste system, possessed of esoteric knowledge freeing them from the behavioural norms of the masses, and nevertheless supervising the punctilious performance of those norms as officiating priests (while accepting the Vedanta philosophy rendering those norms worthless).

It thus comes about that persons with English education and college degrees, nay, those who have actually studied abroad in Europe

[1] Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekananda, Madras, c. 1909, p. 31.

or America, stoutly maintain total disbelief in the polytheism of the masses, and yet join the throngs at the temples on festival days to fulfil all requirements of the rituals, including the slaughter of the animals. In so doing they exhibit the mentality of the informally initiated, approved in Indo-Aryanism for centuries. 'Is it wrong to condescend to children?' they ask.

2. The Non-Aryan

The following account may look like a piece of blatant humbug, and yet be nothing of the kind. The events about to be described took place at the end of a thirty-eight mile penetration into the remoteness of the jungle. I had gone there at the invitation of an urbanized Gond who knew of my interest in the historical development of local customs, and of my thesis that medieval Gondwana[1] partly accounts for the patterns of behaviour observable today in Mid-India. As the Gond kingdom left no written records, the prospect of witnessing rituals purporting to come down from those times was inviting.

We started from our base at 5 a.m., but on reaching the Hiran River, found the bridge unsafe, and were forced to follow a circuitous route consuming much time. We despaired of seeing the rites supposed to commence in mid-morning. But on arriving at the saja tree in early afternoon, we learned that the illiterates had delayed their procedures pending our arrival, indicating rapport between us from the start.

The ceremony is that of the Panruwa Raj Gonds, and centers around the ancestral god. A Gond may live anywhere, but in order to perform puja, he has to come to his own ancestral shrine along with his relatives and their families. If living at a distance prohibitive to the females, the males at least must attend. On this day there were about sixty persons of the same *gotra*, mostly adults, and of them, three fourths were males.

The particular rite for the day was the third-year funery ritual. In the literature on primitive peoples, there is mention of the green funeral and of the dry funeral. The former is done immediately at death, when hope exists of resuscitation. The latter occurs when all possibility of the deceased's return from the invisible realm is exhausted, and marks the abandonment of such hope. The rite about to be described is the last and so partakes of the nature of a dry funeral. However, its meaning is not confined to that term.

Among the Panruwa Raj Gonds two types of death ceremonies are common. Some people bury their dead, and others burn them. Those who burn, collect the ashes and go to the Narbudda river 'to

[1] Gondwana is the name given to a kingdom persisting in Mid-India from approximately 1100 A.D., to 1550 A.D., and thereafter down to 1857 A.D. in the form of a subservient tribal state under the Moslems first, and the British second. At present there are about two million living Gonds in the inaccessible portions of the central plateau.

cool the ashes in the water'. This is called *tarana taran.* (In Hindi it is called *thunda karna*). The explanation follows:

Tarana taran means liberation accomplished. (But the Hindi version means to make cool). It involves the spirit of the dead, the cool water, and the living person performing the ritual. Both the dead and the living are liberated, the former from a state of high excitability during which he is liable to torment the living mercilessly, and the latter from such persecution. Otherwise the spirit, so long as not ritually merged in the sacred river, roams here and there, not finding rest. Cooling him in the river assuages, and affords rest and shelter.

But even by putting his ashes in the river, the nearest relative is not entirely free from the ire of the spirit. The ghost does not find his ancestors or relatives in the river. He longs to be with them, in the shrine of god X . . ., underneath the saja tree. For just as the gotra of the living congregate at festival occasions at the sacred tree, so the spirits of the ancestors settle there to remain permanently. But the spirit cannot be joined with his *brauderie* (brotherhood) without the ritual assistance of the living, whom he accordingly afflicts with minor diseases and troubles until they do the needful. The aim of the third-year funery rite is thus twofold: it joins the ghost to the company of the ancestral spirits at the tree, and fixes him there permanently; also, it liberates finally and completely the immediate relatives from the minor afflictions of the semi-somnolent ghost in the sophorific of the river.

This being the intention of the ritual, what is the procedure and rationale? The key to the ceremony is a black earthen pot purchased on the death day and kept in the house where the person died. The ghost can enter that pot, but dare not approach god X—. A religious functionary is required to introduce the ghost to the god, and he does this by bringing the pot to the tree. The ghost is unquestionably in the pot, but where is the god? The god must be induced to enter the person of the functionary who sinks into a condition of *bhau* or ecstacy. While under *bhau* the ecstatic is the human temple of the god; the god is in his body. He should then go to the spot where the pot has been kept, and bring the pot with its resident ghost to the saja tree. This act of fetching the pot represents the stooping of the great god X— to seek and to welcome the abashed ghost, and thus permanent bonds of sympathy are established between them. At the moment when the ecstatic sets the retrieved pot on the shrine beneath the saja tree, at that precious time both the god and the ghost are brought together. The functionary then stretches out on the ground and slowly comes to his senses, as the god leaves him. The relative has the satisfaction of knowing that henceforth the ghost is forever in the bosom of the god, and no further troubles may be expected from him.

This, in rough outline, is the theory of the third-year funery rite being described. The crux of the matter arises at the very point of possible fraud (as understood by the uninitiated). The uninitiated want assurance that the functionary is truly possessed of the presence

of god X—. This is afforded by the functionary's being put to an ordeal or test. The people reason that the great god X—sees all and knows all, and is quite able to find the pot no matter where it may be hidden; but the functionary could not possibly find it except by the remotest chance. Accordingly the relative hides the pot in some bush or tree several hundred yards from the saja tree. The functionary proves his being under the power of the god by proceeding unerringly from the saja tree to the hidden spot, and he does this at a given point in the ritual. The theory is that an ecstatic is unconscious, devoid of his wits, and without any independent mental operations. Whatever he does, he knows not he does it, nor can he remember later what he was doing at the time. It is the god that acts, using the body of the functionary. If the functionary goes to the pot, the uninitiated believe that the proceedings are indeed supernaturally controlled. If he fails to retrieve it at the first try, then they conclude he is no priest but a hoax. It is therefore of prime importance that the ecstatic find the pot; everything else hinges on this.

Accordingly, early in the morning the nearest relative brought the pot containing the ghost and hid it under a bush located approximately two hundred and fifty yards from the saja tree. This was before anybody else arrived. *But he told a few people where he had put it.* This enabled them to judge as to the proceedings. Among others he told Leader A,—who must always be in the know of the location thereof.

The tract was well covered with jungle plants, shrubs, grasses and trees. To choose the correct tangential direction from the saja tree, to run the exact number of yards in that direction to select the specific bush without previous knowledge thereof, would represent one chance in many thousand, and could not occur once in a hundred years of ceremonies.

The foregoing theory was in the minds of the spectators and in my mind as the ceremony began. Would the ecstatic find the pot, or not? The uninitiated were unanimous in expecting the success of the functionary, because of supernatural aid. I also expected the priest to deliver the goods, and was ready to accept any evidence of natural means.

At this point it would be possible to insert a full description of the ritual. One could describe the noise makers, the sacred artefacts (Kusa grass, earthen pots, oil lamp, incense, ghi, iron rings, coconuts, unleavened bread, jaggery, and stone symbols). One could tell of *panji banchana*, or the casting of lots of wheat seed to learn whether the ritual would be successful. Much might be written of the acts to placate all neighbouring gods and goddesses in nearby trees, including the setting to wander, a live chicken. The plaintive melody of the women singers might be felt were proper words chosen. The preliminary sacred bath of the functionary, the *nichawar* rite to protect him and the dancers from demons, using metal pieces to absorb off the imps . . . all these are relevant but not vital to the exposition herein attempted.

Suffice it to say, that about midway in the day's ritual, the functionary began to show signs of extraordinary behaviour. His shoulder blades commenced twitching, his eyes rolled in their sockets, animal like growls and yelps issued from his throat, an overall shaking ensued, and rolling on the ground ... his behaviour was in accord with the cultural pattern for Mid-India ecstacy. Picking up sacred saja leaves and iron rings he leaped and cavorated for some moments, and then squatted at the shrine, moaning.

At this instant, Leader A—who was manipulating the ritual artefacts drew close to the ecstatic and whispered in his ear. About twenty seconds were required to communicate certain information.

Here it must be asked, 'Did the uninitiated witness this whispering? Some did but most did not. Those who saw it would not suspect any betrayal of the secret, simply because the theory does not permit their unsophisticated minds to engage such a possibility. The majority did not see the whispering because their attention was not riveted on the shrine. A crowd of illiterates in Mid-India admit they do not know how to do the rituals, and do not try to learn them. They resign such into the hands of the functionaries. They have seen the mystifying gestures before, and recognize them. All is as it should be; the procedures, whatever their nature, appear to them to be developing as in the past. Meanwhile, there are relatives seen but once a year with whom to speak, children to dandle and control, and the hard ground is uncomfortable, requiring frequent shifts of position. It therefore is possible for the whispering to take place between the informally initiated, without fear of challenge from the uninitiated.

About forty seconds after the whispering, the functionary stood erect turned in the right direction, and ran to the spot, followed by the curious spectators. Stooping down he picked up the ghost-filled vessel, and bore it back in triumph to the shrine, depositing it with shouts and bodily shakings. The ritual of joining the ghost to the entourage of the god proceeded. Finally, the aged functionary lay down on the ground and appeared to regain his senses.

After the termination of the ritual, the people sat down to enjoy the funeral feast. I drew Leader A— and the erstwhile ecstatic aside, along with the government school teacher, himself a tribesman. Among the many questions asked them, the following need be mentioned here:

Q: How often do you perform such ritual?
A: Three years after there is a death.
Q: Does the priest always go into ecstacy at such a ritual?
A: Yes, always.
Q: What is this *bhau*?
A: It is the spirit of the great god come on him.
Q: It is the spirit of the dead man?
A: No.
Q: Is the priest unconscious during this ecstacy?

A: No. What about it pandaji?

Here the functionary made this disclosure:

I am fully conscious during this seizure. If unconscious, how would I know what to do?

Q: I saw one woman come to the shrine during the ceremony, but only one. Who is she?

A: She is the widow of the deceased, so naturally she wept and wailed, and came to the shrine.

To review the situation just described, the uninitiated believe the functionary to be out of his head, and he knows they define him thus. Yet, he tells me privately that he is fully conscious, but behaving as if he were not. The uninitiated consider the discovery of the ghost pot to be proof of supernatural intervention, but Leader A— whispers to the functionary certain information immediately before his unerring trot to the generally unknown spot. Leader A— the functionary, and the government school teacher (the informally initiated) tell me these facts without hesitation. It seems to be a clear case of outward behaviour at variance with inner thinking. Shall we call it hypocrisy? My answer is, No. Then what is it? It is *dharma*, and *khel*, and *lila*.

I
Dharma

One of the English words used to translate *dharma*, is custom . . . the social habit of a particular group. In a society still 85 per cent illiterate, the power of custom may not be properly assessed by people nurtured in totally literate societies. The latter have rarely had the experience of performing important acts for no other reason than tradition. That the elite, those who have ceased to believe, should act in preliterate societies as if they believed, is a source of astonishment or contempt, depending on the literate observer. The social force of *dharma* is simply incomprehensible to him.

Moreover, most Western societies are large and homogeneous. Patterns of conduct prevail over large areas and among huge populations. But in Mid-India, society is fragmentized into small caste and ethnic groups, each with its own *dharma*. In their mental isolation, these groups place extremely high value on their own customs, and perform them without reference to belief, but with other motivations and compulsions. That belief is at variance with practice is not a moral problem, nor any other kind of problem. The variance is simply not relevant, not to be considered.

II
Khel

The word *khel* means play, amusement. In Mid-India the informally initiated frequently tell me they are present in the ceremony simply to see the *khel* and nothing more. In a crowd of some two

thousand persons, 99 per cent of whom believe in the supernatural nature of what may be transpiring, there will be a very few illiterates who do not credit the proceedings. They say frankly that they like to see the show. As the afternoon wears on, the same will enter into the affair with the uninitiated, performing the acts with seeming piety. When challenged they will say, 'Oh, it is all *khel*. Is there any harm in *khel*? We have been seeing this since our childhood and we enjoy it. Our ancestors said there is something in it. After all, what is the harm?'

It begins to dawn on the observer that in Mid-India belief is not very relevant to ritual. To celebrate the old and dear rituals of a lifetime is in itself sufficient warrant for participating in them.

III

Lila

Again, some of the informally initiated look upon the affair of the masses as a bit of *lila*, or sport or drama. Lila is really, magic sport. In the beginning the Creator made the world for no other reason than to sport with his magic power. The universe is the result of wand waving and spell chanting, and has no real existence. Human existence, material objects, even events are nothing but illusions. If the Creator can wile away his time in *lila*, why can't we?

'What is the point in challenging us on score of belief? We do not, as a matter of fact, believe in anything except the existence of the Creator. We do not even believe that we ourselves exist, and only in our ignorance does it seem to us that we are acting or speaking or thinking. The whole show is a species of unreality. Surely, to make the most of the situation by engaging in more *lila* is not wrong'.

That *dharma* and *khel* and *lila* provide the informally initiated with sufficient excuse for doing what they disbelieve, is a conviction borne in upon the writer by many contacts and experiences in Mid-India, all of which are duly recorded. These terms represent what the experience of feigning and pretending and contradicting belief and practice, means to people in Mid-India. It is therefore quite erroneous to call it hypocrisy, and to do so only registers the speaker's misunderstanding of the phenomenon.

A last illustration will make the point obvious. Suppose that a Christian in the ice and snow of North Dakota, U.S.A., were to be confronted by an Oriental with the content of the St Nicholas story. The Oriental would exclaim: 'Look here! You (a man who has grown up and understood this folly) say you don't believe that a jolly old elf from the North Pole arrives on your housetop at midnight on Christmas eve. You (an informally initiated man) say there is nothing to the common belief of children as to his coming down the sooty chimney with his bag of toys. Yet, you tell your innocent babes this monstrous lie. You even enact the farce annually, pretending to believe it. Tell

me, is there some moral lesson, say of the reward for virtue, that you wish to teach by this pretension?' The Dakotoan would probably answer: 'Don't be stuffy!' The Oriental would then speculate further! 'There must be some social value in this pretension, perhaps the achievement of harmony with the younger generation?' The Dakotoan would then guffaw. 'But this is monstrous! Fraud! Hypocrisy!' I will not venture to imagine what would happen next. Suffice it to say that consistency between belief and practice is seldom seen; in fact, inconsistency may be the normal condition of mankind, most of us proceeding in a condition of happy unconcern.

EXAMPLES OF HINDU PRAYERS

Adoration

And He my thoughtless heart hath fixed in thought of Him alone;
He taught me that which none can learn, what none can see laid bare;
What tongue tells not He told; me He pursued and made His own.
The spotless pure, the Holy One, my fell disease He healed,
And in Puntruti to me, e'en me, He Himself revealed.

(*Devaram*)

Confession

In right I have no power to live,
  Day after day I am stained in sin;
I read but do not understand;
  I hold Thee not my heart within.

Daily I am sunk in sin;
  Naught know I as I ought to know;
Absorbed in vice as it were my kin.
  I see no path in which to go.

(*Devaram*)

Petition

Vishnu, spouse of Lakshmi, and four-ways facing-Brahm,
Searched the heights and depths but Thy feet could never see,
Yet, O only Lord, who in Athihi does dwell.
Formless, in Thy grace, grant the sight of them to me.

(*Devaram*)

Saint's Prayer

Thou knowest my weak condition. I cannot bear to see fatigue, distress, or sorrow in my relatives and others. I cannot stand the hunger, disease, or poverty that afflicts others. The friends, young and old, relate to me the woes of life, and speak to me about their family feuds; I burst into tears. My heart shudders at the mention of wretched sinners who mercilessly kill innocent dumb creatures to satisfy their greed under the pretext of religion. In the name of a hundred false deities people kill oxen, goats, and hens.

—Ramalinga Swamil

Chapter XXXI

Not Getting Angry

Stanza 1

He who controls anger where it might be effective really controls it. What does it matter, whether anger is controlled or not in situations where it will have no effect.

Stanza 2

Impotent anger is bad. Anger that is effective is worse.

Stanza 3

Anger against anyone should be given up; for its consequences are evil.

Stanza 4

Anger kills cheer and graciousness; does one need any other enemy?

Stanza 5

If a man wants to protect himself, let him guard himself from anger; or else anger will kill him.

Stanza 6

Anger not only kills the man but also his relatives. (literally; anger not only kills the man but also burns the boat called kindred).

Stanza 7

He who relies on anger is like the man who strikes with his bare hand the ground (i.e., both are foolish.)

Stanza 8

It is better not to get angry even if one harms us to the extent of heaping burning coals on our body.

Stanza 9

The ascetic who never gets angry realizes his desires immediately.

Stanza 10

He who lives in anger is as one dead. But he who overcomes anger has overcome death. (i.e., he has over come the process of Karma or cycles of births and deaths.)

Chapter XXXII

Not Hurting others

Stanza 1

Even if it brings wealth and glory, do not inflict pain on others. This is the rule of the blameless.

Stanza 2

It is the rule of the blameless not to hurt back those who have inflicted pain angrily.

Stanza 3

Even hurting in return those that have hurt us without cause, brings grief that cannot be overcome.

Stanza 4

The way to punish evil doers is to do good to them that they may be ashamed.

Stanza 5

Looking at others distress as one's own is the benefit of getting knowledge. Is more benefit needed?

Stanza 6

Find what hurts and refrain from doing them to others.

Stanza 7

Never, not even in thought, do the least harm to others.

Stanza 8

Why should one, who has suffered wrong and knows it, inflict it on others? (that is such acts are inexcusable).

Stanza 9

If in the forenoon one does wrong, in the afternoon he will be wronged.

Stanza 10

All pain is from those who inflict pain on others. So those who do not want pain should not inflict it on others.

Chapter XXXIII

Not taking away life

Stanza 1

Virtue consists in not killing, but the basis of vice is killing.

Stanza 2

Share your food and sustain many lives. This is supreme knowledge.

Stanza 3

The highest good is not killing, the next in merit is not telling lies.

Stanza 4

What is the good way? Is it not refraining from slaying?

(N.B. The poet has in mind killing animals and birds for food and not murder.)

Stanza 5

Ascetics give up life, because they realize its nature. But of all the ascetics the best is one who refrains from killing because he realizes its nature.

Stanza 6

Life-devouring death doth not cut short the life of one who does not kill.

Stanza 7

Do not kill even in self-defence.

Stanza 8

Good people eschew great wealth and prosperity if it is brought about by killing.

(**N.B.** The poet has in mind killing animals in sacrifice, which is supposed to bring prosperity.)

Stanza 9

Those who slaughter (animals for food) are reckoned as 'Pulaiyas' by those who know.

(**N.B.** Pulaiyas are outcastes and are considered to be the lowest in strata of society.)

Stanza 10

People suffer from dire poverty and dread disease because in their previous life they have killed.

Chapter XXXIV

Transience

Stanza 1

Those that count the transient to be permanent are ranked low.

Stanza 2

Great wealth is like a dance-hall-audience which disperses as soon as the function is over.

Stanza 3

Wealth without acquired merit does not last. If you get wealth secure its permanency by proper means.

(**N.B.** The proper means to secure permanency is worship, good deeds, and charity.)

Stanza 4

The saw of time, with its uniform teeth of days, saws away life say those that discern.

Stanza 5

Do good deeds quickly, before tongue fails, and breath ceases.

Stanza 6

The glory of the world is such as to say, 'He was yesterday, and today he is not'.

Stanza 7

People do not know whether they will live one instant, but their thoughts, (intentions and desires) are more than ten million in number.

Stanza 8

Spirit is related to the body as the chicken to the eggshell. The birdie walks out leaving alone the shell.

Stanza 9

Dying is like going to sleep; being born is like waking from sleep.

Stanza 10

A permanent berth is not available in this body.

Chapter XXXV

Giving up (Desires)

Stanza 1

He who gives up certain things needs not worry about their maintenance or loss.

Stanza 2

If you desire (real happiness) give up (desires). After giving it up many good will come to you.

Stanza 3

Anyone desiring release should give up at once (not gradually) the pleasures of the five senses.

Stanza 4

Owning nothing is asceticism. Otherwise it is delusion.

Stanza 5

If even owning the body is too much for the ascetic, what about other possessions?

Stanza 6

He who overcomes the delusion of 'I' and 'My' enters the highest heaven of Gods.

Stanza 7

Sorrows will hold him fast who holds fast to desires.

Stanza 8

The best ascetics give up every thing. Others are caught in the net of delusions.

Stanza 9

Desirelessness cuts the cycle of births and deaths. Other things manifest transience.

Stanza 10

Attach yourself to God who needs no attachment. You have to attach yourself to God in order to detach yourself from attachment of the world.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MADHAVA

Introduction: The influence of Madhava in India is great. People admire Sankara, but they follow Madhava. In South India the average man is either a Saivite, or a Vaishnavite or a Madhavite. Through the influence of Chaitanya and Vallabha, Madhava's influence has spread through North India too.

The Substance of Madhava's Philosophy: His main tenets are:

1. Hari, the personal God is Supreme
2. Souls are dependent upon God
3. Souls are not of equal status, some are superior, others inferior
4. The universe is real
5. There are five eternal differences, namely:
   - (*a*) God is different from souls
   - (*b*) One soul is different from another soul
   - (*c*) God is different from the universe
   - (*d*) Soul is different from matter
   - (*e*) Matter is different from matter.
6. Release is enjoyment of the soul
7. Devotion is the means for release
8. Hari is known only by the study of the entire body of Vedas.

Pramanas of Madhava. Madhava accepts three pramanas as criteria of knowledge, they are:

1. Pratyaksha (Perception through senses)
2. Anumana (inference or reason)
3. Sruti or the revealed word

However, all the pramanas are not of equal value. Of the eight tenets mentioned above, four cannot be obtained through perception; these four are:

(*a*) Supremacy of the personal God
(*b*) dependence of soul upon God
(*c*) release, as the way of salvation
(*d*) the knowledge of God

Neither reason nor perception can give the knowledge of these truths; only revelation can furnish man with the correct knowledge on such matters. Therefore in religious matters revelation is supreme. But, where revelation seems to be contradictory, there reason can guide us; that is, the statement of revelation when it is in accordance with reason is to be preferred to a statement of revelation which is contrary to reason. In secular matters pratyaksa and anumana are supreme. If sruti or revelation is opposed to pratyksa or anumana in secular matters revelation is to be rejected.

Pratyaksa is defined by Madhava as relationship between sense organs and the object, when they are unaffected by defects. The defects are the natural limitations of the sense organs.

Sruti includes the four Vedas, the Vaishnavite writings called Pancharatras, the original Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Brahma Sutras.

Madhava also claimed that anything written by any devotee that is not in conflict with the Sruti is authoritative. He thought that all portions of the Vedas are equally authoritative. In this he stands in sharp contrast to Sankara and Jaimini. Sankara said that only Jnanakanda, i.e., philosophic portions of the Vedas, was authoritative, while Jaimini claimed that only the ritualistic portions were authoritative.

Vedas are self-sufficient authority, i.e., no other guarantee is needed to establish the validity of a statement. Moreover, Vedas are eternal i.e., neither God nor man wrote it. If one says that man wrote it, then the Validity of the veda is questioned, but if the authorship is ascribed to God, then a vicious circle is created. The vicious circle is this—the existence of God is dependent upon the Vedas and the validity of the Vedas is dependent upon God.

God: We cannot establish the existence of God by our reason, or by our experience. Only the Vedas say that Vishnu is supreme. So God is He from whom the origin, the protection, the destruction, the orderly disposition and the release of the universe take place. God is the Supreme, ultimate, universal Cause. He is not the material cause. He is the efficient cause of the universe.

God created the world not out of nothing, but out of prakrti.

God is present everywhere, because He is immanent. At the same time God is more than the universe because He is transcendent.

Madhava does not distinguish between Saguna Brahma and Nirguna Brahma as Sankara does. There is no such thing as the Absolute. The Brahmasutras do not speak of a distinction, within the ultimate. So there is nothing beyond Hari. He is the absolute but He has a body and limbs, and He is an embodiment of numerous perfect attributes—attributes like goodness, purity, graciousness, love, truth etc., He is intelligence, existence and bliss. He is Iccha, Jnana and Kriya (i.e., will, knowledge and action). There is no distinction between God and His attributes or between God and His limbs. This God incarnates, and there is no difference between the incarnate and God.

Souls: Souls are reflections of the forms of the Supreme Being. Madhava calls them *abhasa*. Since the souls are reflections five things follow:

1. The soul is different from God
2. The soul is eternal
3. There is similarity between soul and God
4. The soul is dependent upon God for its existence
5. They are infinite in number and they are different from one another.

There are differences among the souls. These differences are corroborated by the experience of men. Therefore each soul is unique. The pleasure and pain the ambitions and disappointment of one soul

are different from those of any other soul. Each soul is an independent experience centre. The (atomic nature) anusadhana, and the persistent identity of each individual is the evidence of the inherent and essential difference between one soul and other souls. The similarity of God and the soul is limited to certain facts i.e., just as God is existence, intelligence and bliss, soul also is, in essence, existence, intelligence and bliss. However, the soul is entirely dependent upon God. Its energy and the very little power it has got are derived from God.

The soul has to a certain extent free will. The Soul is free to choose between good and bad. Madhava compares the freedom of the soul to a carpenter who has the freedom to work but has to do what the employer wants him to do.

Souls are atomic in size and dwell in the heart of man. But though the soul is situated only in the heart, it pervades the whole body of man. To illustrate this he uses the analogy of a drop of perfume touching a particular part of the body that makes the whole body fragrant.

There are an infinite number of souls. These souls are intelligent. But there is a hierarchy of intelligence. The chief among the souls is Vayu; Vayu is, in essence, pure strength. Souls cannot approach God, because God is inside prana which He pervades. Thus Vayu is intermediary between souls and God.

Classification of Souls. Madhava divides souls into three classes on the basis of their inner qualities. There is something in the inner nature of man that contributes to determine the direction of his activities. That is, according to Madhava, the doctrine of Karma, though good in itself, is not a complete solution of the problem of evil. Some men always choose the good and incline towards the good. This difference in attitudes cannot be adequately expressed by the law of Karma. There must be something in the very make up of personality. If the good qualities (sattva gunas) preponderate, that person naturally chooses the best. So, some people are nityas, that is they have been always, are now, and ever will be good. They will never be associated or entangled in the vicious round of births and deaths. On the other hand there are demonic spirits. In between come the ordinary people of this world whose qualities are mixed.

The Universe is Real. The Universe is real because our sense perception tells us so. We need not distrust our sense organs if they function normally. Even when a statement of sense perception is wrong we ultimately use only sense perception as the criterion to prove the validity or non-validity of that statement. That is, sense perception is its own standard of judgement. Therefore the universe is real.

Secondly the universe is real because reason (anuman) tells us it is so. To base the unreality of the world on the reason that sense organs are unreliable is not sound reason. It reflects on the nature of God. It assumes that man is endowed with sense organs so that he may be deceived by false impressions.

Thirdly the Sruti tells that the universe is real. He quotes many slokas from the Upanishads to support his point. Thus he comes to the conclusion on the basis of all pramanas that the universe is real.

Differences between God, and soul and world are real: There are five differences between these entities as was pointed out earlier. All these are real differences. God is different from man because He is the creator and is independent whereas souls are dependent and cannot create. Souls are different because of the make up the characteristics and also on account of the individuality possessed by each soul. The difference between God and the universe is real because the material cause of the world is prakrti and God is the efficient cause. Again God is the sustainer while the world is sustained. So the difference is real. On the other hand the view that God and the world are identical is based either on the view that the world is illusory, God being the only reality or on the theory that God Himself appears as the world on account of the limiting adjunct or 'upadhi'. Both views are untenable according to Madhava. The world is real has already been proved by the pramanas. The latter theory of the 'Upadhi' defeats itself—because there must be two entities in that case—that is God and 'Upadhi' These two militate against monism. Differences between soul and matter, also matter and matter are also real. According to Madhava awareness involves difference. To say that a thing is matter, is just to separate matter and differentiate it from the spirit. That is, without difference knowledge does not shine. To become conscious of an object is to perceive difference. Reality and difference are co-existing and one cannot be perceived without the other.

Final Release: Madhava calls this Mukti. This is soul's enjoyment of its inherent happiness. The soul is of the essence of existence, intelligence and bliss. But it is associated with or incarnated in a body. This body is material, non-intelligent and always changing. So, the soul's happiness is clouded by its association with matter. The soul is always in bliss in its purity. But in the associated state it is ignorant. Though ignorant it seeks happiness. In order to attain it, it does acts that are good or bad. Madhava affirms, as already pointed out, a limited freedom of human will. On account of this man goes on accumulating karma. Some times a small portion of his bad or good karma takes him to hell—or takes him to heaven. But all the rest of his karma go on accumulating from life to life. This accumulating karma is called sancita karma. There are two other effects of karma namely 'Agami Karma' (the future ones) and 'Prarbdha'. The last one is karma that has begun to bear fruit. After a long series of births and deaths, the soul feels helpless and calls upon God to have mercy or grace upon it. Then God, in his graciousness grants to the soul a vision of the final release. When this great vision comes to a man, all the sancita karma will be wiped out and all the Agami Karma will cease to work. However, just as the potter's wheel continues to spin around for some time even after the potter's hand is withdrawn, so

also the prarbdha karma will continue to bear fruit. When that karma is worked out salvation will be obtained. This exhaustion of the final phase of karma might take several lives. So in Madhava there is to be found the theory of a 'Paradise lost' or a 'fall' which is regained by the grace of God.

The state of mukti is not purely negative or the absence of pain and sorrow as Sankhya and Nyaya affirm. It is positive in the sense that the soul enjoys real happiness. Again, the soul does not lose its individuality as in the case of Shankara's philosophy. The difference between souls and God continues as before and each soul is different from every other soul. There is no necessity for these released souls to make any effort. They acquire a body which is new material and is made of Shuddha Satva. They have perfect peace and harmony with the will of God. There are four different kinds of final release. In each one of these God by His mercy assigns to the released soul a particular place or station in the realms of salvation. The first one is called 'Salokya' this is dwelling in the same world as that where God dwells. The second one is called 'samipya' that is living near to God. The third one is 'Sarupiya' that is having the form of God, and the fourth one is 'Sayujya' that is living by, in or with God. None of these souls will ever be born again.

The Technique or Method of getting Release. The vision of God is necessary to obtain release. This vision is not a physical perception. Seeing the incarnation of God is not enough. The mental image of God in meditation is not enough. Madhava has in mind a non-sensual perception. It is a spiritual insight, an insight which does not arise from ordinary perception. This is only possible for men by the grace of God and this is dependent entirely upon the will of God. 'Whomsoever He chooses unto him is given the sight of God.'

This sight cannot be reached by teaching, intelligence or by deep learning. But men have to fulfil certain conditions to become eligible to receive the vision of God. One of these is moral conduct. Another is the knowledge of Vedas. A third is devotion. A fourth is a guidance by a competent teacher. When a man has all these he has to wait patiently for the grace of God to dawn upon his soul. The good conduct includes control of the senses and mind and a stoic indifference to pleasure and pain. The devotion Madhava has in mind is an intense affection towards the Lord, that transcends every other affections and attachments.

Meditation and Worship. The devotees of Hari prepare themselves by worshipping and meditating on Him. So, Madhava gives definite rules for meditation. Most of them are taken from Brahma Sutras. First of all meditation must be uninterrupted. It must be undertaken only in the wakeful state. So, walking or standing or lying down will not help. Sitting is best. The body as well as the mind should be at rest. The spine, head and neck must be erect. The whole body must be motionless. The eyes must be kept gazing at the tip of the nose.

The mind must be kept firm. The senses must be withdrawn from outward objects. The meditation should be on Vishnu that He is the truth, that He is the joy, that He is lord. In the early stages an idol can be made use of to symbolise God. The image is not God. It is only a reminder of God. However, Brahman can be thought of as present in the image as immanent.

When the aspirant has progressed sufficiently and he is not able to progress further, he should go to a teacher, who is competent to guide him. This teacher must be honoured, respected and obeyed implicitly. Very soon the tie that binds the heart is cut assender and God is seen face to face spiritually. This beatific vision is the *summum bonum* of Madhavas religion.

The Doctrine of Delusion

The word Delusion occurs quite often in the Gita. However, there are several different terms that are used in the original and it would help us if we see some of the important words that are connected with the concept of delusion.

First of all, the Gita speaks of two different kinds of delusions. There is the delusive power of Krishna or Divine delusion or Maya and the deluded ignorance of man. Thus, in IV: 6 it is said.

> 'Though (I am) unborn, and my self (is) imperishable, though (I am) the Lord of all creatures, yet establishing Myself in My own nature, I come into (empiric) being through My power (Maya)'.

The original uses the word 'atma Maya'. This 'atma Maya' governs Prakriti. This concept is a little bit different from one that Shankara had. According to Shankara, Maya is identical with Prakriti, whereas in the Gita the atma Maya of Krishna produces Moha or delusion in man. Thus in the XVIII:61

> 'The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the heart of every being and by his delusive power spins round all beings set on the machine'.

This Divine delusive power is creative. So, this power covers or veils so that people don't recognize. Thus is VII:25 we find,

> 'Veiled by my Yogamaya (divine potency) I am not manifest to all. Hence these ignorant folk do not recognize Me as the unborn and imperishable Supreme Spirit (i.e., take Me to be subject to birth and death)'.

To sum up, in Gita Krishna has the power of delusion by which he creates Moha in man and veils his higher nature and also controls prakriti.

Delusion in man is entirely different. In the case of Krishna he is the Lord of delusion whereas in the case of man he is a slave of delusion.

The following are some of the words connected or associated with human delusion: Moha, Mohan, Mohin, Mohita, Mudha, Amudha, Asamudha, Vimohita etc. All these words come from the same root 'Muh'. However, the context gives us a clue to the real meaning. In some places the word means foolishness. Thus in VII: 15 we have

> 'The Evil doers who are foolish, low in the human scale, whose minds are carried away by illusion and who partake of the nature of demons do not seek refuge in Me.'

In other places it is called perplexity. Thus in XI:13 Krishna tells Arjun

> 'As the soul passes in this body through childhood, youth and age, even so is its taking on of another body. The sage is not perplexed by this'.

It is translated as 'misled' in some other places. III:29 has

'Those who are misled by modes of nature get attached to the works produced by them. But let no one who knows the whole unsettle the minds of the ignorant who know only a part'.

The usual translation is 'delusion'. While Krishna is the creator of the delusion he is only its efficient cause. Moha has several instrumental causes. The first one to be mentioned is ignorance. XIV:8 has

'But dullness (tamas) know thou, is born of ignorance and deludes all embodied beings. It binds, O Bharata (Arjuna), by (developing the qualities of) negligence, indolence and sleep'.

Wrath also causes delusion XI:63

'From wrath there come delusion, and from delusion a wandering of memory, from memory wrecked the ruin of reason; with reason's ruin the man is lost'.

In VII:27 it is stated that

'All beings are born deluded, O Bharata (Arjuna), overcome by the dualities which arise from wish and hate, O conqueror of the foe (Arjuna).'

It is also said, sleep, sloth and negligence, delude the soul. Krishna tells in XVIII:39

'That happiness which deludes the soul both at the beginning and at the end and which arises from sleep, sloth and negligence—(that is declared to be of the nature of 'dullness').

The Gita describes very vividly the nature of human delusion. Those who have such delusions try to control their actions but because they do not control their minds they become hypocrites. III:6.

'He who sits holding his organs of action in restraint, but with his mind remembering the things of sense, is called bemused and hypocrite'.

Their delusion makes their work and knowledge useless IX:12.

'Vain of hope are they, vain of work, vain of knowledge, void of wit; they enter the delusive nature of Monsters and of Devils'.

Delusion works through the fire of desire which has its seat in the senses and the mind III:29-40.

'So, Arjun, knowledge is covered by this eternal enemy of the wise, the insatiable fire in the form of desire'.

'These senses, the mind and the intellect are said to be its seat, enveloping knowledge through these, it (desire) deludes the embodied soul'.

The result of the delusion is grave and serious. The deluded man has no stay either in this world or in the world to come. XVI:16.

'Led to error by many a fancy, covered with the net of delusion, attached to the indulgence of desire, into foul hell they fall.'

They do not even know whether they are successful in life or not XVI:15.

> '"I am rich and well-born, who is there like unto me? I shall sacrifice, I shall give, I shall rejoice" thus they (say) deluded by ignorance'.

The way out of delusion is through knowledge IV:35.

> 'When thou hast this knowledge, never again shalt thou this come to delusion, O son of Pandu; by this thou shalt see all beings without exception in thyself, and then in me'.

Another way advocated by Gita to overcome delusion is the path of Yoga VIII:27.

> 'The Yogin who knows these paths, O Partha (Arjuna), is never deluded. Therefore that all times, O Arjuna be thou firm in Yoga.'

Of course the best way to overcome delusion is the path of Bhakti. The whole of the twelfth chapter is devoted to the path of Bhakti. XII:12 says:

> 'For better is knowledge than constant practice, and than knowledge meditation is more excellent; than meditation, abandonment of the fruit of work, after abandonment, peace ensues.'

When release is gained, the divine state, is attained. This state is described as a state in which there is no delusion or bewilderment II:72.

> 'This is the divine state (brahmasthiti), O Partha (Arjuna), having attained thereto, one is (not again) bewildered; fixed to the bliss of God (brahmanirvana)'.

Dr Radhakrishna in commenting on this verse says 'Nirvana has been used to indicate the state of perfection in Buddhism'. Dhammapada says: 'Health is the greatest gain, contentment is the greatest wealth, faith is the best friend, and nirvana is the highest happiness'.

The Gita idea of nirvana is expressed in II: 52

> 'When thy intelligence shall cross the whirl of delusion, then shalt thou become indifferent to what has been heard and what is yet to be heard'.

BOOK REVIEW

D. N. MAJUMDAR: The Fortunes of Primitive Tribes (Lucknow: Universal Publishers) pp. 234.

Here is a fascinating study of three important primitive tribes of North India along with a description of another class of people called 'The Criminal Tribes'. This study is in several respects a remarkable one, full of interest to those who would like to have more than merely a superficial knowledge about the fortunes of some of the primitive tribes in India. The findings of careful investigations resulting in accurate anthropometric tests are given here. Because the author is a medical doctor, he has been able to get serological tests with out much difficulty. Moreover on account of the privileges of his profession he had the opportunity to ask questions on personal and intimately private affairs and receive satisfactory answers from primitive tribes who are very reserved and totally non-communicative with strangers. He has not only described accurately, the patterns of tribal culture but as a social psychologist he has tried to probe into the causes that have brought about their present predicament. So he concentrates on the interlacing of beliefs and customs, especially the predominence of any one of these over the others. 'The ethos of one culture may be overweighed by religion, of another by overemphasis on the economic life, of a third by a fatalistic trend of thought and consequent apathy and indifference to life'. So, to him the major part of a culture is its beliefs and customs. Some of these he groups as cortical and others are called subcortical. The cortical beliefs are manifest in live customs and rites. The subcortical ones are not seriously regarded; these languish and perish because they are not intense and vivid. To the author, culture, primitive or advanced, is a vigilence scheme born out of conscious and unconscious factors.

The old tribal life regulated by a system of taboos and code of conduct was working well in olden days. But in the present changed environment they are found to be meagre and inefficient. So these tribes are in the process of adjustment that is being carried on (sometimes without success as for example in the case of Korwas) in many ways. The author mentions the following:

1. By a gradual substitution as for example religious conversion. 2. By a process of acculturation, that is, slowly absorbing the culture-traits of their neighbouring and more successful tribes. 3. By injecting into their customs, new habits, new business, new dress etc., brought about by contacts with civilization. 4. By degenerating into a sort of 'cultural nomadism' which disintegrates traditional beliefs.

The Korwas are studied first. These people who depended for their economic life on jungles have been cut off by the reservation of forests. Thus their natural supply of food and recreation has been taken away from them. So 'their songs and laughter' are vanishing. They are unable to adjust to their present environments, because

they do not want to absorb the culture of their neighbours. The result is a loss of ambition, that indicates a social neurosis and there is also a loss of fertility that is reflected by the high incidence of sterility and dysgenic reproduction.

The Tharus whose culture is the next subject in these studies afford a pleasing contrast to the Korwas. The Tharus have an adaptive culture. The dominence of the woman in their society accounts for this adaptability to a great extent. This dominance is probably a survival of matriarchal matrix of culture; whatever that might be, the inferior role of men and their subservience to women who alone have ownership of a property are the contributing factors that suppress the scope of male initiative. Under the leadership of women, these people are much better off than other primitive tribes in India.

Quite a large section of this book deals with the Khasas. These are very conservative and have developed on elaborate social organization on a feudal basis. Being immigrants to this region, they organized defence and maintained a social hierarchy having at its apex the Thokdars. Joint family system gave the older brother a much greater position and privilege. So the partition of property was uneconomic. The number of females in the society is much less than that of the males. So fraternal polyandry came to be in vogue. Even when the younger brother wants to marry, the eldest brother goes through the form of marriage ceremony and the younger brother merely catches the little finger of the former, when he circumambulates the marriage pole.

This Khasa culture has not been greatly influenced by contacts, chiefly because these people live in mountains and their remoteness and inaccessibility have controlled immigration. Because of the custom of fraternal polyandry, sex is discussed in public and with freedom. 'There appears to be complete lack of sex repression and men and women find opportunity to release their tension in sex life as often as its necessary'. Since the people are 'conservative, they do not want to change their customs. They are just not anxious to learn from others. These and many other scientifically interesting details are described in simple language so that even a layman can read with profit. So we commend this book heartily, as it is written by a great scholar of anthropology who makes it his business to study the external and internal relationship of the groups of people. His contribution to the study of culture contact is great. There are nearly sixty photographic illustrations that add charm to the presentation of the subject. The maps, charts, and tables are very convenient for handy reference.

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